DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 080 920 CG 008 139

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TITLE Reaction to Attitudinal Deviance: Impact of Deviate's Net Agreement and Direction of Change.
INSTITUTION Pittsburgh Univ., Pa. Dept. of Psychology.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Mental Health (DHEW), Rockville, Md.
PUB DATE May 73
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Eastern Psychological Association Meeting, 3-5 May 1973, Washington, D. C.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS College Students; *Conformity; *Dissent; Evaluation; Group Behavior; Group Dynamics; *Majority Attitudes; Males; Opinions; *Reactive Behavior

ABSTRACT

A review of the literature and research on group reactions to attitudinal deviance precedes the present study in which group members confronted an individual who always agreed, always disagreed, agreed then disagreed, or disagreed then agreed with modal group opinion. In addition to evaluations of the target individual, dependent measures also included attributions of the motives underlying his stability or change and direction and magnitude of the subject's own opinion change. Results suggest that as long as an individual's final responses agree with modal group opinion, he is evaluated significantly more favorably than a consistent opinion correctness, desire to demonstrate assertiveness, and desire to see self as similar to attractive others. Agreement is attributed more to desire to be liked and desire to see self as similar to attractive others. (Author/LAA)

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Reaction to Attitudinal Deviance: Impact of Deviate's Net Agreement and Direction of Change[1]

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Schachter (1951), in his classic study of group reaction to attitudinal deviance, found that individuals who either always agreed with the group or who shifted from disagreement to agreement were liked much better than a consistent deviate. Subsequent to Schachter's work there has been relatively little systematic research on the general problem of reaction to attitudinal deviance. One particularly notable oversight has been the failure to follow up Schachter's finding that a deviate-turned-conformer was liked as much as a consistent conformer. With the exception of a partial replication by Emerson (1954), investigators have largely neglected the problem of reaction to attitudinal deviance, in general, and the variable of deviate movement, in particular.

Recent studies in other contexts, however, have highlighted the potential importance of sequential changes in a target's behavior as a determinant of attraction toward the target. One line of relevant research concerns reaction to changes in the valence of personal evaluations, while another area of inquiry deals with reaction to changes in degree of attitudinal similarity. In a study designed to investigate the impact of shifting personal evaluations on attraction, Aronson and Linder (1965) allowed subjects to overhear a confederate expressing one of four evaluation sequences: consistent positive evaluation, consistent negative evaluation. negative followed by positive evaluation ("gain"), or positive followed by negative evaluation ("loss"). Aronson and Linder found that the confederate was liked significantly more in the "gain" than in the consistent positive condition; in addition, the confederate was liked less (but not significantly

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[1]Paper presented at the meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., May, 1973. This research was supported by NIMH Grant 1 R01 MH21644-01 to the second author.

less) in the "loss" than in the consistent negative condition. These results, though quite provocative, have not been replicated in at least two studies (Hewitt, 1972; Tognoli & Keisner, 1972). Instead, data seem to suggest that liking is greatest in the consistent positive condition, least in the consistent negative condition, and intermediate in the "gain" and "loss" conditions.

In a study designed to investigate the impact of change in degree of attitudinal similarity on attraction, Byrne and London (1966) presented subjects with the ostensible opinions of another individual, whom the subjects then rated on several evaluative scales. The opinions of the target person always agreed with the subject's own opinions, always disagreed, shifted from disagreement to agreement, or shifted from agreement to disagreement. Byrne and London found that the target was rated highest in the consistent agreement condition, lowest in the consistent disagreement condition, and intermediate in the two change conditions (which did not differ significantly from one another). These results were interpreted to indicate that direction of change is of little importance in determining attraction and, therefore, attraction can be explained adequately merely in terms of the proportion of similar attitudes expressed by the target. More recent research, however, suggests that direction of change can be important under certain circumstances. For example, Byrne, Lamberth, Palmer, and London (1969) found that "gain" produced significantly more attraction than "loss" when subjects evaluated the target during, but not after, the series of attitudinal statements attributed to the target. And, Jones and Wein (1972) found that a target was liked significantly better in a "gain" than in a "loss" condition when the "bogus-pipeline" technique was used, but not when rating scales were employed.

The present study was designed to systematically investigate group reaction to a shifting attitudinal deviate. Group members confronted an individual who always agreed, always disagreed, agreed then disagreed, or disagreed then agreed with modal group opinion. In addition to evaluations of the target individual,

dependent measures also included attributions of the motives underlying his stability or change and direction and magnitude of the subject's own opinion change over the course of the experimental trials.

Procedure

The subjects were 78 males drawn from the Introductory Psychology course at the University of Pittsburgh. Data from five subjects were discarded because of failure to evaluate the target individual, leaving 73 subjects.

Subjects, in randomly selected groups of five, were seated in separate booths in a Crutchfield-type electrical signaling apparatus. Subjects were informed that they were participating in a study of parole-board decision making, and were then shown a 15 minute professionally-made film which sympathetically portrayed a youth in trouble with the police. Next, using switches labeled on a 9-point agreement-disagreement scale, subjects expressed their opinions on 30 statements concerning appropriate treatment for the youth. The 30-item series consisted of a six-item set repeated five times, ostensibly because real parole boards sample opinions several times. The six statements were selected from a larger pool of items which previously had been answered by a standardization group of individuals responding alone. The items were selected to minimize response variability.

Through instructions and practice trials, subjects were led to believe that one group member answered in each of the five response positions and that panel lights in all booths indicated each subject's response to each question. Actually, all subjects answered in position <u>one</u> and the experimenter simulated the responses of the other four group members.

Four experimental conditions were used. In all conditions, persons two, three, and five were programmed to give modal responses previously obtained from the standardization group. The responses of person four (the target individual) differed in the various conditions. In the Agree-Agree condition, person four invariably agreed with the simulated responses of persons two, three, and five.

In the Disagree-Disagree condition, person four consistently disagreed with modal group opinion by at least four switch positions. In the Agree-Disagree condition, person four initially agreed but gradually shifted to disagreement over the 30 trials. Finally, in the Disagree-Agree condition, person four initially disagreed but gradually shifted to agreement.

Subjects' responses on the trials were recorded. Following the item series, subjects rated person four on several evaluative scales and made judgments about the motives underlying his initial and final opinions.

Results

Person four was evaluated on four 9-point scales: Intelligence, Likeableness, Open Mindedness, and Reasonableness (see Table 1). On all scales, ratings of person four were rank ordered, from most to least favorable, in the following manner: Agree-Agree, Disagree-Agree, Agree-Disagree, and Disagree-Disagree. A 2 x 2 analysis of variance was conducted on mean ratings on each of the four scales; factors were Initial Position (Agree, Disagree) and Final Position (Agree, Disagree). Significant Initial Position main effects were obtained on Likeableness, Open Mindedness, and Reasonableness ($p < .01$ in all cases). Thus, person four was rated significantly more Likeable, Open Minded, and Reasonable when he initially agreed with modal group opinion (i.e., in the Agree-Agree and Agree-Disagree conditions) than when he initially disagreed (i.e., in the Disagree-Disagree and Disagree-Agree conditions).

Significant Final Position main effects were obtained on Intelligence, Likeableness, Open Mindedness, and Reasonableness ($p < .01$ in all cases). Thus, on all four scales person four was rated more favorably when he finally agreed with modal group opinion (i.e., in the Agree-Agree and Disagree-Agree conditions) than when he finally disagreed (i.e., in the Disagree-Disagree and Agree-Disagree conditions).

Although a significant Initial Position X Final Position interaction was obtained on only one scale (Open Mindedness, $p < .06$), t tests were used to compare the four conditions on all scales (see Table 1). This was done to make the present results more comparable to data obtained in previous, related studies. The t tests indicated that on all scales person four was rated significantly less favorably in the Disagree-Disagree condition than in either the Agree-Agree condition or the Disagree-Agree condition. These latter two conditions, in which person four ended agreeing with modal group opinion, differed significantly on only one of the four scales (Reasonableness). Turning to the condition in which person four moved away from modal group opinion (i.e., the Agree-Disagree condition), we find that person four was rated significantly less Likeable and Reasonable than in the Agree-Agree condition, and significantly more Open Minded and Reasonable than in the Disagree-Disagree condition. In no case did ratings of person four differ significantly in the two change conditions, i.e., Agree-Disagree and Disagree-Agree.

Using 9-point scales, subjects also rated the importance of five motives as determinants of person four's initial and final opinions. A 2 x 2 analysis of variance was conducted on the mean importance assigned to each motive underlying person four's initial opinions (see Table 2). Significant Initial Position main effects were obtained on: (a) belief in opinion correctness ($p < .04$), (b) desire to be liked ($p < .06$), and (c) desire to demonstrate assertiveness ($p < .01$). Thus, compared to the initial agreement conditions, in the initial disagreement conditions person four's initial opinions were attributed significantly more to belief in opinion correctness and desire to demonstrate assertiveness, and significantly less to desire to be liked. One Final Opinion main effect emerged ($p < .06$); no significant Initial Opinion X Final Opinion interactions were obtained.

A 2 x 2 analysis of variance was also conducted on the mean importance assigned to each motive underlying person four's final opinions (see Table 3). Significant Final Position main effects were obtained on: (a) desire to be liked ($p < .01$), (b) desire to see self similar to attractive majority members ($p < .02$), and (c) desire to see self different from unattractive majority members ($p < .03$). Thus, compared to the final agreement conditions, in the final disagreement conditions person four's final opinions were attributed significantly more to desire to see self different from unattractive others, and significantly less to desire to be liked and desire to see self similar to attractive others. A significiant Initial Position main effect ($p < .02$) and a significant Initial Position X Final Position interaction ($p < .04$) indicated that belief in opinion correctness was seen as significantly more important in the Disagree-Disagree condition than in all other conditions, which did not differ significantly from one another.

For each subject, two mean opinion scores were calculated, one for the first block and one for the last block of six items. These scores reflect the mean amount of agreement between the subject's responses and the simulated responses of persons two, three, and five. Analyses of variance (2 x 2) revealed no significant differences among conditions in either the first or last block. Correlated *t* tests then were conducted within each condition between mean opinion scores in the first and last block of items. These tests revealed that over the course of the experimental trials subjects in all conditions, except Agree-Disagree, shifted ($p < .05$) toward the simulated responses of persons two, three, and five. Subjects in the Agree-Disagree condition shifted slightly, but not significantly, away from modal group opinion.

Discussion

Data from the present study are consistent with results obtained in Schachter's and Emerson's investigations of reaction to attitudinal deviance. Results suggest that as long as an individual's final responses agree with modal group opinion, he is evaluated significantly more favorably than a consistent

deviate and his initial responses have relatively little effect on evaluation. Data from the present study also indicated that while an individual who moved from agreement to disagreement did not differ significantly from a consistent deviate on Intelligence or Likeableness, the conformer-turned-deviate was rated significantly more ~~less~~ Open Minded and Reasonable. Thus, it appears that the initial opinion of an individual who ends disagreeing with modal group opinion can affect how this person is evaluated on certain characteristics.

The fact that ratings were most favorable in the Agree-Agree condition, least favorable in the Disagree-Disagree condition, and intermediate in the two change conditions is congruent with the relationship between similarity and attraction typically obtained by Byrne and his colleagues (see Byrne, 1971). And, the fact that ratings were consistently, though not significantly, higher in the Disagree-Agree than in the Agree-Disagree condition is congruent with results from comparable conditions run by Byrne, et al. (1969)and Jones and Wein (1972).

The data on person four's perceived motives reveal an interesting picture of the causal attributions made about his initial and final opinions. Generally speaking, compared to agreement, disagreement was attributed more to belief in opinion correctness, desire to demonstrate assertiveness, and desire to see self different from unattractive others. On the other hand, agreement was generally attributed more to desire to be liked and desire to see self similar to attractive others. This coherent pattern of causal attributions for person four's opinions suggests that such judgments may be useful in clarifying the more "affective" responses typically measured in studies of the relationship between similarity and attraction.

Regarding mean opinion scores, subjects in all conditions, except Agree-Disagree, shifted toward the modal group position during the course of the experimental trials. That no significant movement toward the deviate occurred in

the Disagree-Disagree condition is interesting in light of Moscovici and Faucheux's (1972) evidence that a consistent deviate can sometimes influence majority group members. An important factor in determining a deviate's success may be whether he can break majority unanimity by initially converting one majority member. Moscovici and Faucheux report that overt movement toward the deviate by a single subject was rare; rather, movement usually occurred when two or more subjects moved toward the deviate's position. In the present study, subjects never saw another majority member move toward the deviate, because the experimenter controlled the responses of persons two, three, and five. The absence of any movement toward the group in the Agree-Disagree condition is intriguing. Perhaps in this condition person four gained "idiosyncrasy credits" through initial agreement, which made him a relatively credible information source when he subsequently disagreed with modal group opinion.

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Table 1

Mean Evaluation of Person Four

	Scale			
Condition	Intelligence	Likeableness	Open-Mindedness	Reasonableness
Agree-Agree (17)	2.88_{a}	2.77_{a}	3.43_{a}	2.77_{a}
Disagree-Agree (18)	3.11_{a}	3.61_{ab}	3.94_{a}	4.00_{b}
Agree-Disagree (18)	3.67_{ab}	4.56_{bc}	4.33_{a}	4.39_{b}
Disagree-Disagree (20)	4.45_{b}	5.50_{c}	6.55_{b}	6.10_{c}

Note.--Low score indicates favorable evaluation. Means in the same column with a common subscript are not significantly different by two-tailed t test ($p < .01$ for all comparisons except AA vs. DA on Reasonableness, where $p < .05$).

Table 2

Mean Importance Scores Assigned to

Motives Underlying Person Four's Initial Opinions

Condition	Motive: Belief in Correctness	Desire to be Liked	Desire to Demonstrate Assertiveness	Desire to be Similar	Desire to be Different
Agree-Agree	3.77	5.94	5.94	6.35	7.12
Disagree-Agree	2.83	7.00	4.44	7.06	6.00
Agree-Disagree	3.22	6.72	5.44	7.11	6.44
Disagree-Disagree	2.70	7.45	4.05	7.85	5.85

Note.--Low score indicates motive was rated important.

Table 3

Mean Importance Scores Assigned to

Motives Underlying Person Four's Final Opinions

Condition	Motive				
	Belief in Correctness	Desire to be Liked	Desire to Demonstrate Assertiveness	Desire to be Similar	Desire to be Different
Agree-Agree	3.41	6.00	6.24	6.47	7.18
Disagree-Agree	3.33	5.83	5.61	6.39	6.94
Agree-Disagree	4.06	7.78	5.50	7.22	6.28
Disagree-Disagree	2.15	7.60	4.70	7.80	5.65

Note.--Low score indicates motive was rated important.